

# **1. Introduction**

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This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) assesses the anticipated effects of the proposed City of Auburn General Plan and concurrent rezoning. As presented in the Project Description, the Community Plan includes new goals, policies, and implementation measures and a land use map.

The EIR has been prepared by the City of Auburn as the "lead agency" in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 and adopted by the California Resource Agency amended through 1992. Section 15050 of the State EIR Guidelines (1992) defines the lead agency as the ". . . public agency with the greatest responsibility for supervising or approving the project as a whole."

This consultant and the City of Auburn have attempted to contact all affected agencies, organizations, and individuals through the Notice of Preparation and public meetings and hearings. The responsibility of the lead agency and its consultant, if any, is to ensure that the two basic functions of the EIR, reporting and project modification, are realized.

An EIR is an informational document which will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project (CEQA Guidelines, 1992).

In addition, an EIR on a general plan cannot contain the degree of specificity possible in an EIR on a development project as described below:

The degree of specificity required in an EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the underlying activity which is described in the EIR.

(a) An EIR on a construction project will necessarily be more detailed in the specific effects of the project than will be an EIR on the adoption of a local general plan or comprehensive zoning ordinance because the effects of the construction can be predicted with greater accuracy.

(b) An EIR on a project such as the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive zoning ordinance or a local general plan should focus on the secondary effects that can be expected to follow from the adoption or amendment, but the EIR need not be as detailed as an EIR on the specific construction projects that might follow . . .

*Discussion:* . . . While CEQA requirements cannot be avoided by chopping the proposed project into pieces to render its impacts insignificant the EIR need not engage in a speculative analysis of environmental consequence for future

and unspecified development. (Atherton v. Board of Supervisors of Orange County, (1983) 146 Cal. 3d 346.) (Section 15146, CEQA Guidelines, 1992).

A number of technical documents prepared by various public agencies and County departments as well as the background information assembled by the City in preparing the Plan were used in writing this EIR. These documents are referred to throughout the EIR and listed in the Sources section at the end of this document.

The organization of the report is depicted in the following schematic outline. Basically, each chapter is divided into three categories: Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. The Impacts and Mitigation Measures sections have a numbering system which correlates each mitigation measure specifically to the impact it is intended to address.

#### **SAMPLE: ORGANIZATION OF EIR CHAPTERS**

##### **SUBJECT**

(Example: Hydrology)

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**Setting** A description of the environment which may be affected by the project.

**Impacts** Impact Evaluation Criteria. The standards against which impacts are measured, with the goal being to determine whether or not impacts will be significant.

Impact #1: For example, a specific type of impact such as degradation of water quality...

Conclusion: The final statement on whether the impact is significant, and if so, a determination of whether or not the impact can be reduced below the level of significance.

Impact #2: A different type of hydrologic impact such as changes in groundwater levels...

Conclusion: Significant, less than significant, unmitigatable, mitigatable . . .

Impact #3: And so on . . .

**Mitigation Measures** 1. Recommendation to reduce the severity of Impact #1.  
(For example, methods to improve water quality.)

Effectiveness of Measure: A statement on whether or not the recommended measure will reduce the impact below the level of significance.

Implementation: A statement of how the measure will be implemented.

Monitoring: A statement of how the measure will be monitored.

2. Mitigation measure for Impact #2.
3. And so on . . .

All of these conclusions are listed in table format in the Summary

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In addition, as appropriate, an attempt is made in each issue discussion to address the following impacts:

## 1. Plan Impacts

- At interim periods where data is available and where relevant
- At ultimate buildout

In addition, where appropriate impacts within the City and the Sphere of Influence are separated. The requested new additions to the Sphere of Influence are also called out separately where appropriate to shed light on the impacts of this action. Where proposed Sphere of Influence is referred to this means the existing and proposed additions. The term Sphere is often used in place of Sphere of Influence.

## 2. Cumulative impacts, City plus County buildout combined

- This discussion combines buildout of the unincorporated Auburn/Bowman Community Plan (ABCP) area outside the City's proposed Sphere of Influence in County land use designations with City buildout of the current City limits and proposed Sphere of Influence under City proposed land use designations and thus constitutes one form of cumulative analysis. (This area was chosen because the greater Auburn/Bowman Community Plan area is a definable and separate region of the County.) It should be noted that impact discussions of the proposed Plan alone are also cumulative; this is the nature of a General Plan.

## 3. Existing Plan vs Proposed Plan. This comparison is provided in the Alternatives chapter since the impact of the adoption of the Plan relates to the physical development pattern it will provide for rather than how it differs from the previous plan. Occasionally, the comparison is provided within Impact sections for informational purposes.

## 4. Comparison to County Plan. Comparison to the proposed County Plan for the proposed Sphere of Influence is also provided in the Alternatives chapter.

### Limitations

This document addresses the impacts of the September 1992 Draft City of Auburn General Plan and concurrent Zoning Map adoption. If there are any major changes in the Plan goals, policies, implementation measures, or land use map, further environmental review may be required.

In addition, over time if any of the basic assumptions on which the Plan was built changes significantly, or if conditions in the City change significantly, the Plan may require adjustment and further environmental review may be necessary.

**Table 1-1  
CITY OF AUBURN GENERAL PLAN ASSUMPTIONS**

The following assumptions were used by the consultant and the Citizens Advisory Committee during the development of the General Plan:

1. Residents often locate in Auburn because of its small-town atmosphere and rural environment.
2. Auburn will grow at a moderate rate.
3. Significant growth will occur outside of the current city limits.
4. Single-family residential development will continue to be dominant, with some increases in multi-family development.
5. Higher densities will locate where urban services are available.
6. Automobile transportation will be dominant.
7. The Highway 49 corridor, Downtown Auburn, Old Town Auburn, and the Interstate 80/Lincoln Way area will be the primary commercial centers of the City.
8. Some public service and facility improvements are needed for existing Auburn residents.
9. New growth will increase demands for public services and facilities.
10. Growth in the area will require the conversion/use of natural resources – land, water, and habitat.
11. The construction of the Auburn Dam and Route 102 will not be completed within the time frame of this General Plan.

SOURCE: Auburn General Plan, p. III-1.

**Intended Uses  
of this EIR /  
Program EIR**

This EIR will be used by the City of Auburn Planning Commission and City Council to determine whether or not implementation of the General Plan will result in significant environmental impacts. This EIR should be considered a Program EIR as described in Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The individual activities which are connected to the General Plan because of the logical sequence of implementation of the Plan and which have generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways are listed below:

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**1** Activities for which no additional environmental review will be necessary.

Concurrent rezoning of the Plan area.

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**2** Subsequent activities which are part of the overall recommendation of the General Plan but which will need to be reviewed for potential new effects when proposed.

**Actions:**

- Revision of Sphere of Influence
- Rail transit station
- Establishment of new redevelopment area

**Revisions to Ordinances**

- Zoning Ordinance text consistent with newly adopted General Plan
- Revisions to Subdivision Ordinance consistent with newly adopted General Plan
- Hillside Development Ordinance
- Second Unit Ordinance revisions
- Open Space Ordinance
- Stream, Canal, Waterway Protection Ordinance
- Habitat Protection Plan
- Landscape Ordinance
- Hazardous Waste and Household Hazardous Waste Ordinance
- Historic District designations and related ordinances
- Other ordinances recommended for revision within the Plan or EIR

**Revisions to Guidelines**

- Commercial/Industrial Design Guidelines

**Revisions to other rules adopted to protect health and safety and promote general welfare of the County**

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### 3 Development Projects

In addition, this EIR can be used to:

- Determine whether or not additional environmental review is needed for individual project applications as part of Initial Environmental Studies. (The Initial Environmental Study may point to the need for a Negative Declaration, subsequent EIR, supplemental EIR, or EIR addendum.)
  - Focus topics to be discussed in future EIRs or to simplify discussions in future EIRs (particularly cumulative impact discussions).
  - Certain types of projects as referenced in Section 15183 of the CEQA Guidelines may rely on this EIR for a large part of the normally required issues to be addressed as part of the environmental review process.
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